UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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INTERIOR AND ARMY SIGN COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR WATER PROJECT IN LOUISIANA: WATERFOWL TO BENEFIT

A major waterfowl wintering area in Louisiana today was assured a long life by joint action of the Department of the Interior and the Corps of Army Engineers. A cooperative agreement between the two Federal agencies will protect the fish and wildlife values of Catahoula Lake from construction of Lock and Dam No. 2, a part of the Ouachita Black River Navigation Project near Jonesville, La.

Under the agreement, the Corps will use funds appropriated for the project to construct a diversion channel from Catahoula Lake to Black River downstream from the dam site with an outlet-control structure at the lakeward end of the channel; construct a low dam in Little River at elevation 34 feet above mean sea level to prevent flow into Catahoula Lake from the navigation pool; and maintain these structures as part of the project.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the Department of the Interior will assume responsibility for day-to-day operation of the control structures to regulate water levels in the lake under a plan to be developed cooperatively with the Corps and the State of Louisiana.

Great numbers of ducks winter on the lake and the adjoining Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge. This high use by waterfowl depends upon normal water-level fluctuation over the open lakebed. The zone between elevations 27 and 30 feet includes about 18,000 acres of land which produces waterfowl food plants. These plants are maintained by an annual drying up of a great expanse of lakebed during the summer and reflooding after the growing season has ended. Control facilities will provide for maintaining ideal waterfowl conditions on Catahoula Lake to mitigate damages resulting from the project.

Joint planning for this water development by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife was under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. Locating the Jonesville Lock and Dam downstream from Jonesville will allow deeper water for harbor and industrial development in the area, provide water deep enough for incidental navigation a considerable distance up Tensas River, and improve recreation possibilities.

Approximately $5\frac{1}{2}$ million in project funds will be spent by the Corps of Engineers specifically for facilities to prevent project-caused damages to the natural waterfowl food-producing area in Catahoula Lake.

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